Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NCDHH)

**Mental Health Advisory Committee Meeting**

Approved August 17th, 2021

**Date:** April 29th, 2021  
**Time:** 2pm – 4pm  
**Location:** Online Zoom meeting  
**Interpreters:** Sharon Sinkler and Amber Tucker

**Minutes:** Traci Johns  
**CART:** CART Services of ERI / Tracy Steele

**Members Present:** Ms. Vicki Steinhauer – Campbell, Ms. Linda Wittmuss, Ms. Tracey Minto, Vickie Frizzell Pratt

**NCDHH Staff Present:** Mr. John Wyvill, Executive Director; Mr. Cody McEvoy, Behavioral Health Coordinator

**Technical Advisors Present:** Ms. Diane Meyer, Ms. Sue Czaplewski

**Members Absent:** Mr. Benjamin Clancy, Ms. Kathleen Valle

**Technical Advisors Absent:**

**Meeting called to order:** Ms. Vicki Steinhauer-Campbell, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 2:04 p.m.

Ms. Steinhauer-Campbell announced the notice of the meeting was duly given, posted, published, and tendered in compliance with the Open Meetings Act, and all board members received notice simultaneously by email. Publication of official notice of the meeting appeared in a legal newspaper of general circulation in this state, as required by the Open Meetings Act.

**Approval of the agenda:**

Ms. Tracey Minto made the motion to accept the agenda. Ms. Sue Czaplewski seconded the motion.

**Approval of the prior meeting minutes for January 14th, 2021:**

Ms. Linda Wittmuss made the motion to accept the minutes as written. Ms. Tracey Minto seconded the motion.

**New Business**

* New Term dates/Members

Members and participants gave brief introductions. Mr. McEvoy shared that it may be beneficial to reach out to Heartland Deaf Advocacy Services to ask if they would like to have a representative in the committee. Ms. Steinhauer-Campbell gave an overview of the duties of the Chairperson as her term will be ending.

* Mr. McEvoy shared that he will be adding insurance information for the counselor group in the Behavioral Health Website to help make it easier for users to find the right counselor. He has been collecting the list of counselors as well as their photo and their bios. He also wants groups that are focused on domestic violence and he plans to use vlogs to showcase the resources that are already available. He asked members if they have any ideas or if they see a nicely formatted website that breaks the information up into different pages to pass that information onto him.

Ms. Wittmuss mentioned that a link to the website from the Division of Behavioral Health services may be beneficial to users as the NCDHH website would have more information. Mr. McEvoy also commented that it may be helpful to include the counselor’s experience with Deaf culture or working with interpreters at a later stage of the website development.

Mr. McEvoy shared that he found two new counselors through Psychology Today website. Ms. Frizzell Pratt mentioned that NCDHH can be added to Psychology Today as a resource.

* Enrichment Grant Update

Mr. McEvoy reported that there is a meeting this week regarding the CDI (Certified Deaf Interpreter) training that hopefully will be held this fall. Mr. McEvoy explained that CDIs are useful in mental health services and in legal and medical settings. Nebraska has a great need as there are no Certified Deaf Interpreters at this time.

Ms. Steinhauer-Campbell mentioned it would be helpful to look into how other states support certified interpreters to help them maintain their certification as that seems to be an issue.

Ms. Czaplewski asked for more information on the assessment process for a CDI and Mr. McEvoy explained that it is a new test and that it is a national level test. Ms. Sharon Sinkler, NCDHH Interpreter Program Coordinator, explained that a Deaf Interpreter (DI) is a state certification while the Certified Deaf Interpreter (CDI) is a national certification and is a test through the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) who contracts with CASLI. She also mentioned that the CASLI website has a lot of information about how to become a Certified Deaf interpreter.

* **NCDHH Executive Director Report** – Mr. Wyvill
* Director Wyvill commented that the Commission has a number of events scheduled. In the Panhandle, events include a showing of The Silent Natural in May and in June they will have their baseball game to promote Deaf Awareness Day. The Deaf wrestler that had a very unfortunate outcome due to lack of communication access in the state wrestling championship will throw out the first pitch at that game. That region is also working on a zoo event. Outside of that region, the Lincoln Deaf Awareness baseball game will be August 3rd and the Omaha Zoo event will be in late September or early October.
* Director Wyvill reported that a new advocacy specialist will be starting on March 24th.
* Directory Wyvill also commented that with COVID dying down that the Commission will be taking a more active role out in the community and that board meetings will be back in person starting in June for the IRB.
* Director Wyvill shared that the agency is also making a revision to the Rules and Regulations related to interpreters. In addition to technical corrections, the Commission has also added the Apprentice License. The Commission has submitted the changes to the Governor’s and AG’s office and we are awaiting approval.

**Agency Updates**

**Ms. Tracey Minto**

* Ms. Minto reported that she has been using Wavello application and it has been a useful tool for her. She said it is HIPPA compliant according to the Wavello website and that it allows for better viewing of the client and interpreter. It also works well with groups.

**Ms. Vickie Frizzell Pratt**

* Ms. Frizzell Pratt commented that she uses Doxyme.com and that it works well. The free version does not allow for groups, but for a monthly fee of $39 you can add that.
* She also mentioned remote EMDR (eye movement desensitizing and reprocessing) website that is useful for relieving symptoms of trauma and anxiety and helpful in establishing mindfulness and calm. It is an application for $60 a year and it couples with Doxy.me.
* Ms. Frizzell Pratt commented that April is Alcohol Awareness month and that it would be a great topic for the website to promote awareness and give information. Other topics could include bipolar disorder, anxiety and information about new medications for mental health and substance abuse.

**DHHS- Div. of Behavioral Health - Ms. Linda Wittmuss**

* + - Ms. Wittmuss shared that there is federal emergency money available through a variety of avenues and for different populations, including a SAMHAS substance abuse and mental health services administration emergency grant. Soon there will be an RFI from the Department of Health and Human Services and it's going to be for mental health and substance use services for people who have been impacted by COVID. Impact will be considered for something that has been exacerbated this past year, for example someone lost a job or spent a long time in the hospital.
    - Ms. Wittmuss also commented that that May is Children’s Mental Health Awareness Month.
    - Ms. Wittmuss reported that they also are waiting on final signature from the Governor’s office for a Rules and Regulations change, including a chapter on peer support. It gives the division the statutory authority and regulation to do the certification of peers. This may be something to consider going forward for the population served by this committee.
    - The Fiscal Year 2020 annual report is going to be uploaded to their website and the 2017-2020 strategic plan has come to a close. Ms. Wittmuss shared that based on feedback they are working on specifically trying to improve on evidence-based practices to be able to demonstrate outcomes.

**Nebraska Department of Education – Ms. Sue Czaplewski**

* + - Ms. Czaplewski reported that they are seeing mental health challenges for students and they are trying to address that with their regional program. Vicki Steinhauer‑Campbell and Ms. Czaplewski are working on the transition summit team. A transition summit will be held for students in 9th through 12th grade this summer and hopefully it will be in person at UNL.

**Nebraska Regional Program** - **Ms. Diane Meyer**

* + - Ms. Meyer shared that they are still in a virtual mode and with students on some type of a video conferencing platform for learning eight hours a day they are trying to find things that catch their interest and pull them in. The southeast regional program was doing an activity in the evening called Gab and Grow. It was monthly and there were different themes related to advocacy and included some social games and activities. It was led by a college student who is Deaf and Hard of Hearing himself. This activity focused on students from 5th through 8th grade.

Ms. Meyer reported that they had a teen night that was led by a teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing who is Deaf herself for 7th through 12th grade. Also, they had Sunshine 2.0 present, which is a Deaf/Hard of Hearing troupe out of RIT/NTID. They did a presentation workshop combination on a Friday evening called Mobias. And coming out of that there were various things that Mobias explored including STEM related activities.

Other activities that have happened include Clowning Around where they learned how to clown, a teleparty where they watched a movie and then the kids chatted together about it. There have been kits sent to the homes of the students for the whole family to do like a butterfly craft kit or a May Day kit. The metro regional program will have a summer enrichment program for two weeks and all activities will be outside to follow guidelines that include not using masks. They will be studying nature, hiking and looking at plants and animals and focusing on sports so the students can learn the rules. They will work on skill development and then play some of those games.

* + - Ms. Meyer thanked Mr. McEvoy for helping with the hygiene and mental health activity last fall and that they are hoping to have that again and have it in‑person so the students can do some practice interviews.

**Nebraska VR – Ms. Vicki Steinhauer – Campbell**

* + - Nebraska VR is having a public hearing as they are considering opening up Priority One group in their order of selection. Ms. Steinhauer-Campbell explained that Priority One is a group of people who have two or more significant disability functionalities that interfere with job seeking. Priority Two is only one significant barrier and then the Priority Three group have a barrier but really nothing significant or severe. Nebraska VR has hired 35 new staff to meet the demand this last year, most likely from large number of workers that retired early due to the pandemic.

Nebraska VR is excited that this year they will be able to do work‑based learning for high school students in pre-employment transition services so that they can gain work experience during the summer. Nebraska VR works closely with 19 different businesses for this program. Information is available on the website about the program.

**Next Meeting Dates / Meeting Time from 2p – 4p**

* Next meeting date August 17th (Lincoln).
  + November 11th – Thursday (Omaha)

The meeting adjourned at 3:08 pm.